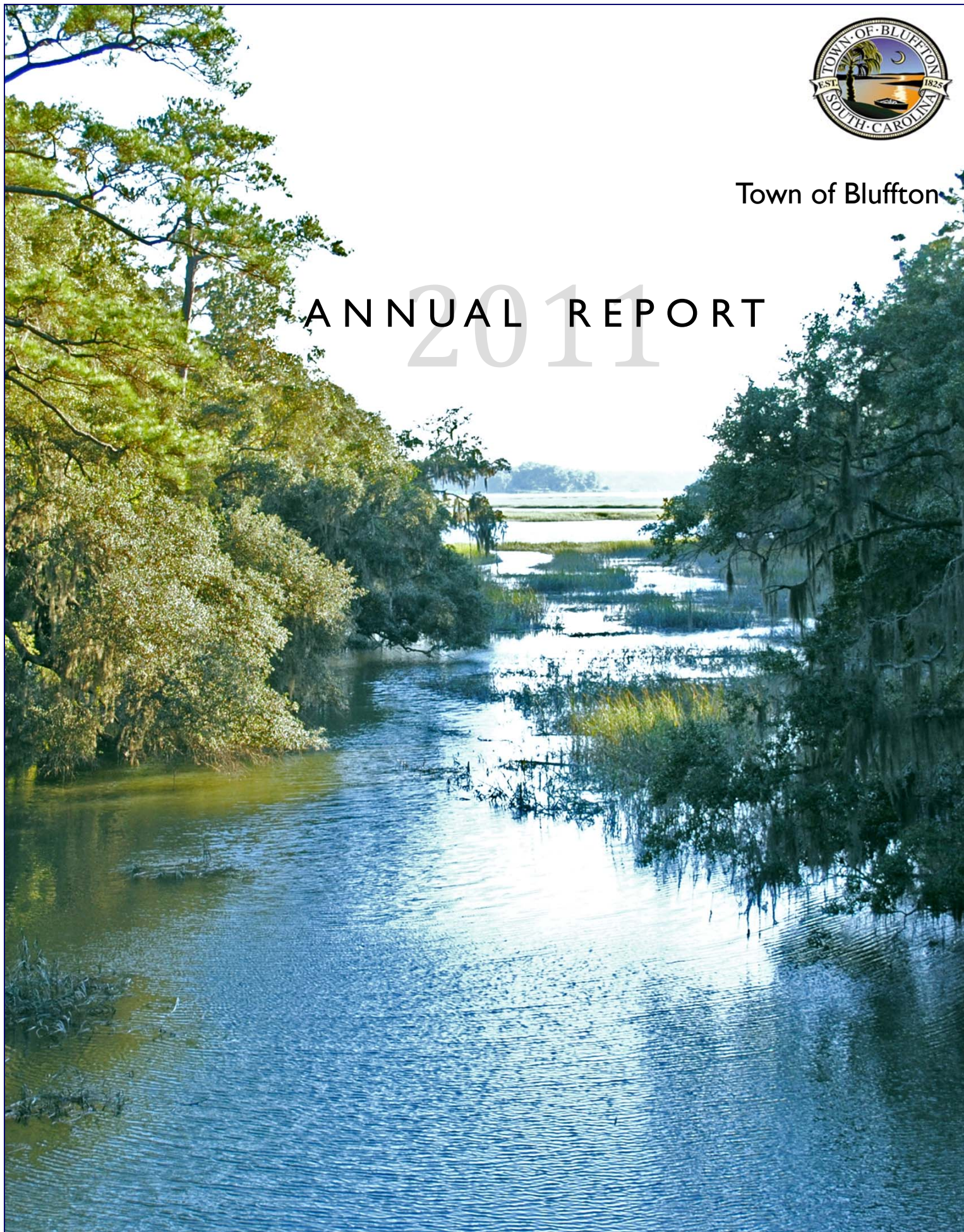




Town of Bluffton

ANNUAL REPORT

2011



Bluffton Town Council

Lisa B. Sulka, Mayor

Fred Hamilton, Mayor Pro Tempore

Oliver Brown, Councilman

Allyne Mitchell, Councilwoman

Mike Raymond, Councilman



Councilman
Oliver Brown



Mayor Pro Tempore
Fred Hamilton



Mayor
Lisa Sulka



Councilwoman
Allyne Mitchell



Councilman
Mike Raymond

A Message From Mayor Lisa Sulka

A heartfelt welcome from the Town of Bluffton, where our State of Mind is healthier than ever...

In this report, you will be able to see detailed information that focuses on every chapter of our Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a very important document for our Town, and serves as our template for all that we do. This can be downloaded in its entirety on our website, www.townofbluffton.sc.gov.

The nine chapters are: Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Population, Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Community Facilities and Priority Investment.

This document was updated in 2007 and is to be reviewed again in 2012. After reading this, you will see first hand how our goals are related to this plan and that our accomplishments tie

Some notable accomplishments are: attaining our first bond rating, completing construction on the Law Enforcement Center and Building and Grounds, continuation of park development, Unified Development Ordinance, May River Action Plan, the Wharf Street affordable housing project, Streetscape and Way Finding Signage.

We also continue to be a “transparent” government in every aspect of our Town. All agendas, staff reports, financial reports, minutes, budget, project costs and progress, and a calendar of events are some of the documents that can be found on the Town website. Take some time to go to our website and you will see how easy it is to stay involved on our Town.

I am honored to be your Mayor and feel that we have served you well over the past year in setting and achieving our goals that were laid out in our yearly planning retreat.

We are here to serve, so if we can ever be of assistance, please feel free to give us a call.

A Message From Town Manager, Anthony W. Barrett

Two years ago, it was my good fortune to have been appointed Town Manager of Bluffton. From the first day and continuing, the Mayor and Council's direction was clear and direct: "We are tired of studying—we are ready to get things done".

I am pleased to report that this directive was taken as a serious mandate and was passed onto our very competent Staff.

In this short period of time, we have:

- Achieved a bond rating of Aa2 from Moody's and AA- from Standard and Poor's;
- Built a state of the art Law Enforcement Center, which is rated as a Category III Hurricane resistant building;
- Overhauled an outdated code to a more user friendly "form based" format with a proposed Growth Management map;
- Created a Stormwater Division to implement the May River Action Plan, and cleaned miles of drainage ditches and compiled an annualized maintenance schedule;
- Signed a Technology Incubator Agreement with Clemson University to be sited at CareCore National at the Buckwalter Tech Park ;
- Awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the third consecutive year;
- Set up an affordable housing program with the construction of six housing units;
- Constructed a new Public Works Facility;
- Upgrades to the Oyster Factory Park;
- Realigned and prioritized the Five Year Capital Improvements Plan;
- Emphasized Community Policing throughout the Town;
- Created a "one-stop-shop" permitting system for improved customer service; and
- Maintained the same millage rate for the second year in a row.



I am honored and privileged to have played a part in these successes. There remains much more to accomplish and we continue to press forward on the many remaining initiatives to sustain and improve the way of life in the Town of Bluffton.



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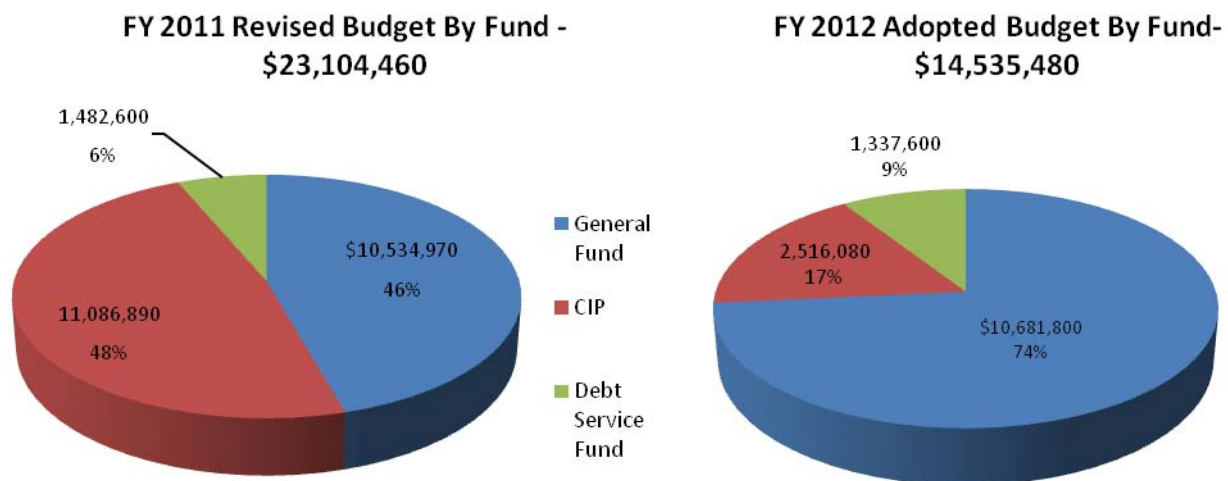


Town of Bluffton Finance Department

Finance

- Implemented formal Financial Policies adopted by Town Council June 8, 2010.
- Issued GO Bond for the construction of the Town's new Law Enforcement Center in FY 2011.
- Refunded the Town's 2005 and 2006 Series Tax Increment Financing Bonds resulting in elimination of the original Debt Service Reserve Fund and a Net Present Value (NPV) Interest savings of \$424,400.
- Implemented Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) No. 54 in the audited financial statement for fiscal year 2011.
- Awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- Finance Manager successfully completed the certification program for designation of a Certified Government Finance Officer (CGFO).
- Initiated quarterly meetings with Grants Writer Consultant to increase awareness of available grant funding and application approvals.
- Coordinated efforts for governmental transparency initiative and developed a standard template for additions to Town's Web Site including grant funding reports (new section titled "Grants In Action") and briefings on major projects and programs in progress.

Consolidated Budget Comparison



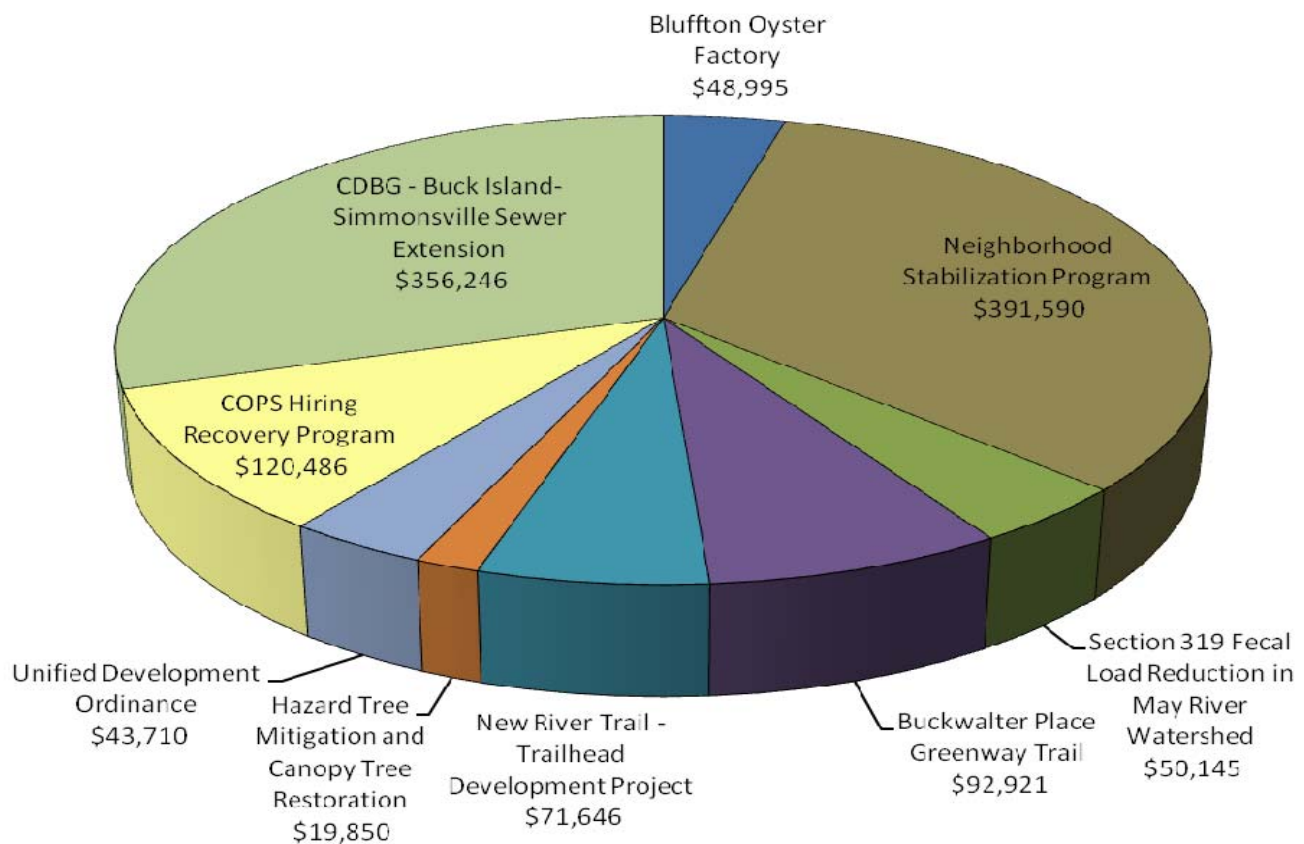
Business License

- Implemented new software program module for local Accommodations and Hospitality Tax processing and reporting. With this implementation Business License, local Accommodations Tax and Hospitality Tax receipts are maintained on one system.
- Implemented bar code reader to facilitate processing of Hospitality and Accommodations Tax remittance forms.
- Adopted and implemented Business License Incentive Program offering abatements to qualifying new businesses. (Town Goal 4.)
- Performed Internal Audit Review of the business license revenue stream to identify areas of redundant or outdated accounting processes to gain efficiencies and accuracies.

Municipal Court

- Improved Court Case Management by transitioning an increased number of court cases yet to be disposed into alternative programs.
- Continued professional development of Court personnel by active participation in professional associations and training sessions.

FY 2011 Grant Reimbursable Expenditures - \$1,195,589



Information Technology

- Located virtual servers in Beaufort for Disaster Recovery.
- Upgraded six operating servers to Windows Server 2008.
- Went live with new upgrades to the Town's website giving presence on www.sc.gov, the official website of the State of South Carolina.
- Website additions include: Grants In Action, CIP Project Summaries, Town News, Emergency Preparedness, and Parks & Recreation.
- Developed Town ATLAS for residents and businesses.

What Do You Want to Know About Bluffton?

COMING OCTOBER 12—Town of Bluffton will unveil **Bluffton Explorer**. A new interactive website that will be available through the Town of Bluffton website, www.townofbluffton.sc.gov. All in one place!!

Just a few of the things that can be done with **Bluffton Explorer**:

- Search for any address in the Greater Bluffton area; determine if your property is within the Town of Bluffton limits and more! With point and click, you can view Beaufort County property records and Town information on the property such as zoning and find out who your representatives are or school zone.
- Find a restaurant (menus on website), shopping, churches and non-profits or to obtain and print directions anywhere in town or to view traffic cameras anywhere in Beaufort County.
- Measure property size, view GPS coordinates or find out if a building is suitable for solar energy generation.
- Social media tools, upcoming events in the greater Bluffton area or track hurricanes and severe weather.

Our GIS department strives to provide a one stop place to obtain information for our Town. We invite you to visit our website and discover new things in Bluffton and our surrounding areas.





Town of Bluffton

Growth Management Department

Community Development

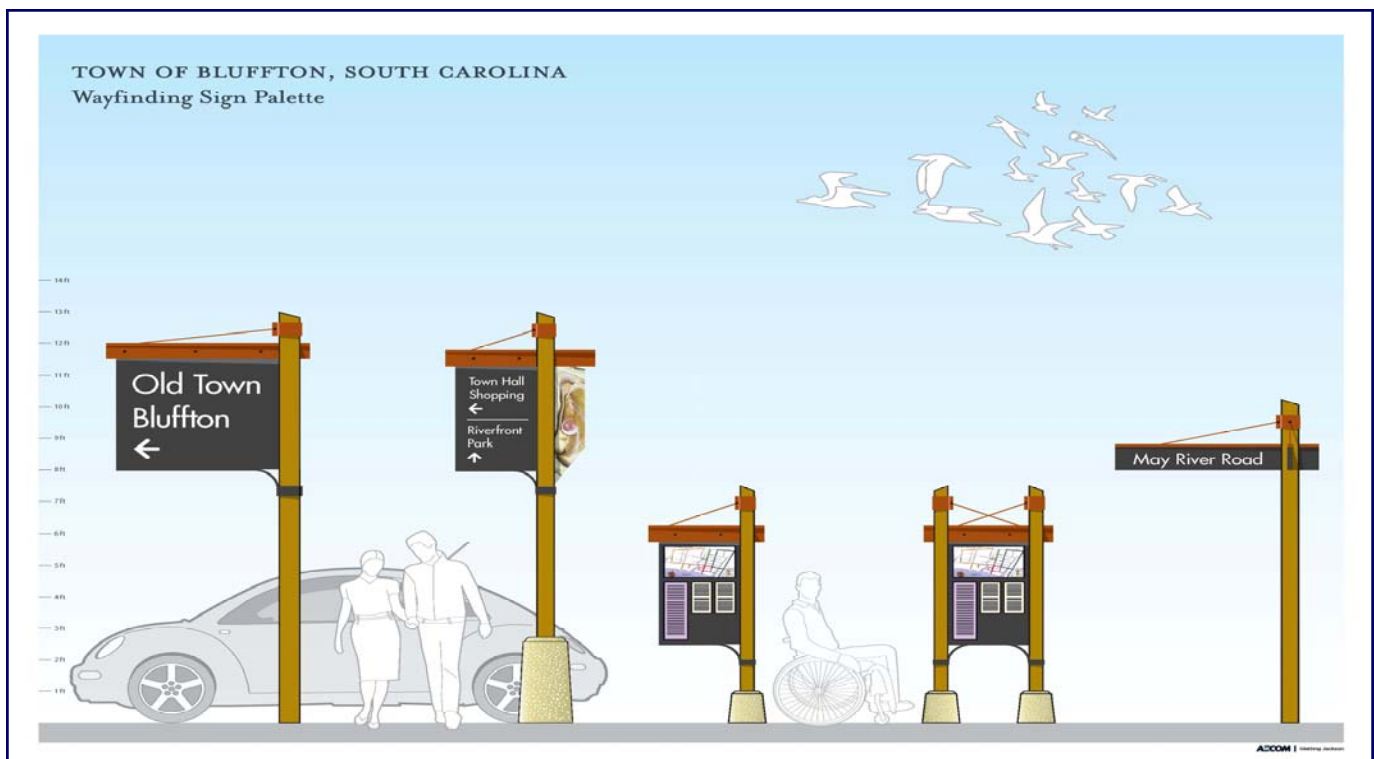
- In partnership with Beaufort Housing Authority, broke ground on the Wharf Street Redevelopment Project that entails construction of six modular cottage style affordable homes located in the Old Town Historic District
 - Majority of funding provided through the South Carolina State Finance Development Authority Neighborhood Stabilization Program and HOME funds grants.
 - Construction commenced in August.
 - Homeownership application process began in October.
- Worked with community interest groups to implement the Buck Island and Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. Initiatives included:
 - Created the Town's Neighborhood Assistance Program to assist Bluffton residents with home repair, septic system maintenance and repair, property clean up, abatement/demolition of unsafe structures, heir's property assistance and
 - E-911 address posting.
 - Conducted twenty home repairs
 - Conducted sixteen septic system repairs
 - Conducted five property clean-ups
 - Conducted seven unsafe structure demolitions



LEFT: Wharf Street Redevelopment Project Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Planning and Environmental Sustainability

- Facilitated a 0.41 acre property donation located at the northwest corner of May River Road and Bluffton Road for the purpose of creating public space at a significant location in the Old Town.
- Selected by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as one of thirty-two communities across twenty-six States to be initial participants in the Sustainable Communities Building Blocks Program. EPA provided technical assistance to identify essential smart growth fixes for urban and suburban zoning codes.
- Updated the Town of Bluffton Annexation Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Overhauled the Town's zoning and development standards ordinances and Official Zoning Map to establish a Unified Development Ordinance. Substantial funding provided by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Section 319 Grant as well as the South Carolina Non-Point Program Capacity Building Grant for Local Governments.
- Established a Growth Management Applications Manual to provide clarity and streamline the application review process to improve both customer service and staff review efficiencies.
- Updated Stormwater Design Manual to provide flexibility in designing stormwater management systems.
- Joined Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head Island on the Southern Corridor Review Board to provide a consistent review of architecture and site design along major regional corridors.
- Completed a significant portion of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District Wayfinding Signage Program. Substantial funding provided through the National Park Service Preserve America Grant Program.



ABOVE: Wayfinding sign types and designs being installed in Old Town and at major intersections throughout Town.

MAP OF Old Town BLUFFTON



The Bluffton community has an AUTHENTIC HISTORIC DISTRICT, celebrates the MAY RIVER and respects THE BLUFFTON CHARACTER.

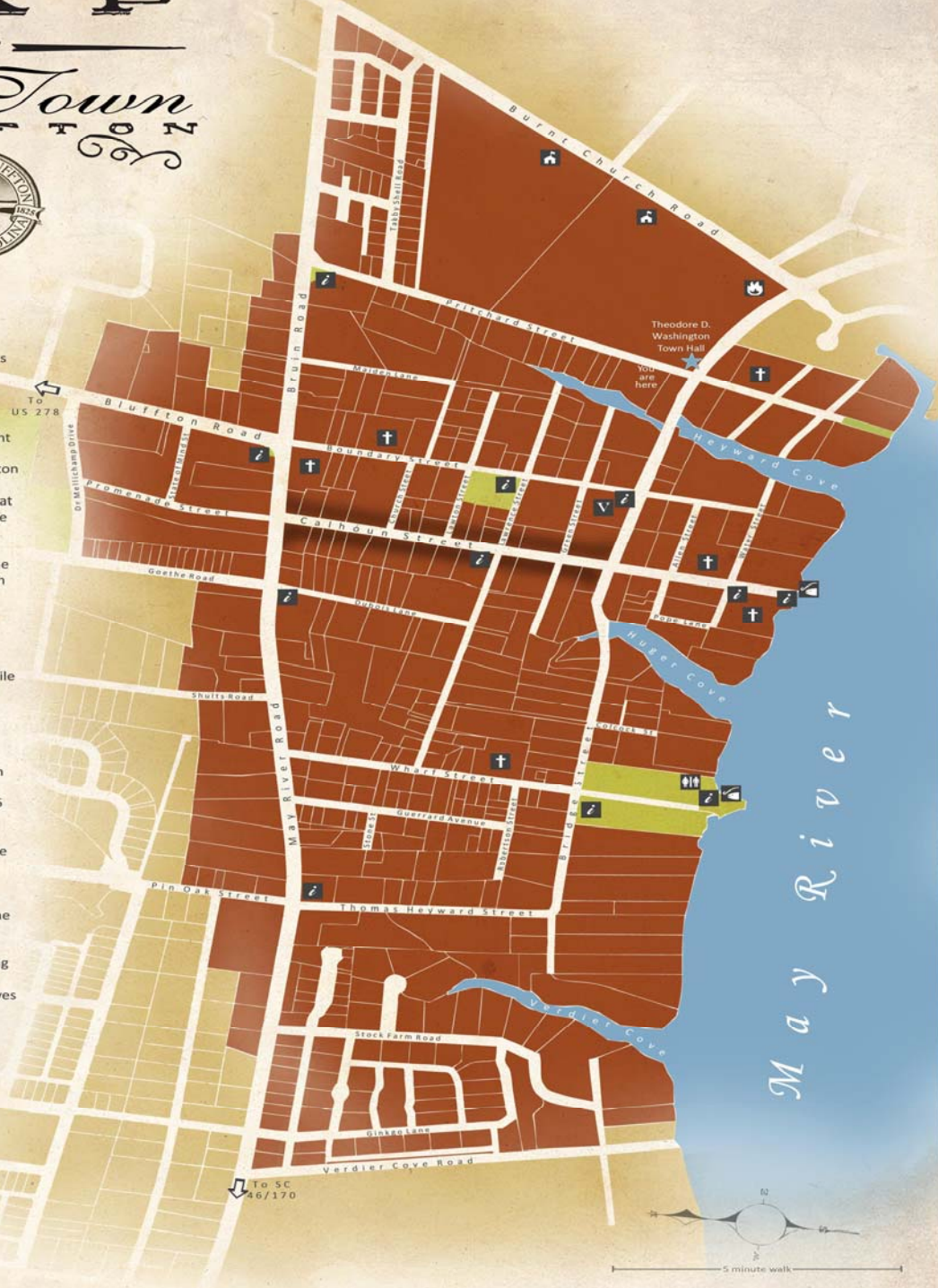
Following the American Revolution, long-staple sea island cotton and rice grown on mainland plantations brought tremendous wealth to the Carolina Lowcountry. In the early 1800's, Bluffton became a summer resort for planter families seeking relief from intense heat and disease carrying mosquitoes of the mainland rice plantations. Summer cottages were built on the high bluffs and coves of the May River to catch the cooling breezes. The street grid, which still exists today, was laid out in the 1830's and provides river and marsh views.

The Town of Bluffton, incorporated in 1852, was comprised of one square mile and remained this size for almost 130 years until the first annexation took place. Bluffton has since grown to approximately 54 square miles and is one of the largest municipalities in South Carolina. The Old Town Bluffton Historic District was granted National Register Historic District status in 1996 and celebrates more than 80 Contributing Structures. In addition, Bluffton was established as a "Preserve America Community" in 2005.

Preservation of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District and conservation of the May River are priorities as the Town continues to grow. The Town of Bluffton's guiding documents, including the Old Town Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, promote initiatives for protection of these important cultural and natural resources.

Legend:

- Information Kiosk
- Visitor's Center
- Public Park
- Historic Church
- Fire Station
- School
- Public Restroom
- River Access
- You are here
- Old Town Bluffton Historic District



Garvin House



Seven Oaks



Scott's Grocery

Sketches donated by Doug Corkern.

This material is based upon work assisted by a Preserve America grant administered by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

Customer Service Center

- Established a “one-stop-shop” for Town of Bluffton applications and general information.



LEFT: The new Customer Service Center located at Town Hall.

Emergency Management

- Established Town of Bluffton Emergency Operations Plan.
- Established Town of Bluffton Post-Disaster Recovery Plan.
- Conducted Post-Disaster Recovery Table Top Exercise for the Town of Bluffton Incident Command Team.



The Town of Bluffton works with Beaufort County to ensure that citizens are properly informed in the event of a storm. Operating conditions and important links are always listed on the Town of Bluffton website at www.townofbluffton.sc.gov.

BELOW: Staff reviewing Emergency Operations Procedures and conducting a table top exercise at the Law Enforcement Center prior to the onset of Hurricane Season.





Town of Bluffton Human Resources

Human Resources

- Preventative Workplace Health screenings were offered to employees in April by the South Carolina Employee Insurance Program
- An e-learning program was created for the Town of Bluffton employees. Biz Library offers training in:
 - Professional Skills
 - Business Skills
 - Computer and IT Skills
 - Online IT Classes
 - Health and Safety
 - Legal Compliance
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Sales
 - Leadership
 - New Manager and Supervisor Training
- Automatic external defibrillators were installed in all Town of Bluffton municipal buildings.
- Developed an employee suggestion program where employees are encouraged to make constructive suggestions for the improvement of operations at the Town. We then give appropriate recognition and rewards for suggestions that are accepted. Examples of eligible suggestions include:
 - More efficient ways to do a job or reduce cost;
 - Improvements in product quality, vendor relationships, or customer service;
 - Better methods to provide services;
 - Ways to reduce waste;
 - More efficient ways to use room or office space;
 - New sources for obtaining parts, materials, or supplies;
 - Ideas for improving attendance and punctuality;
 - Methods of making work areas safer, cleaner, or more comfortable; and
 - Better ways to safeguard Town and employee property



LEFT: Employees enjoy Thanksgiving lunch at the Rotary Community Center



Office of the Town Clerk

Town Clerk's Office

- Both Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk graduated from the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute, a three year program that provides municipal clerks and treasurers with critical skills for their profession. Graduates attend 120 class hours on topics such as financial management, government, public administration, conducting meetings, and the role of the municipal clerk. Completion satisfies the education requirements for certification from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers and the Association of Public Treasurers.
- Established the Wall of Honor for distinguished Bluffton citizens.
- I Pad roll out for Mayor and Council to utilize in Town Council meetings.



The Wall of Honor Committee functions as an advisory board to Town Council, recommending citizens of distinction for inclusion on the Wall at Town Hall. Citizens may be deceased or living and should make or have made significant contributions to the Bluffton community and exemplify the best of Bluffton.



ABOVE: Sandra Lunceford, Town Clerk appears with other graduates from the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Municipal Clerks and Treasures Institute in August at The Department of Archives and History in Columbia, SC.



ABOVE: Kimberly Chapman, Deputy Town Clerk appears with other graduates from the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Municipal Clerks and Treasurer's Institute in February at the Newberry Firehouse and Convention Center in Newberry, SC.



Town of Bluffton Police Department

Police Department

- Lowered indexed crimes by 7%.
- Organized and staffed the neighborhood Services Division to assist communities with in-depth and ongoing issues. Work included:
 - Worked with traffic engineers to identify and remedy problem intersections;
 - Created a Dumpster Management brochure to help protect the May River from pollutants from dumpsters in the Old Town;
 - Successfully held National Night Out in two neighborhoods;
 - Investigated and problem solved ongoing loitering issues involving area convenience stores and neighboring properties;
 - Worked with Crossroads Community Services to develop the Helping Hands Project to identify and assist families with meals during the 2010 Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays;
 - Worked with Mill Creek subdivision to form a Neighborhood Watch.
- Completed the transition to the new facility located at 101 Progressive Street. This new facility is state-of-the-art and provides a safe environment for customers and staff. The transition included:
 - Moving over 1000 pieces of evidence that needed to be inventoried before and after move;
 - Training all personnel in the new operation of the facility ;and
 - Moving all town computer functions to the facility.
- Joined the Internet Crimes against Children Task Force which led to the arrest of a child pornographer within the Town of Bluffton.
- Officer Mike Creason was awarded School Resources Officer of the Year for the State of South Carolina. Mike is currently assigned to McCracken Middle School.
- Handed over 1,200 pieces of individual evidence and wither stored, processed or destroyed them according to legal requirements. Processed over \$120,000 in illegal drugs that were seized through investigations.
- Captain Tubbs attended the prestigious FBI National Academy and was the first officer from the Town of Bluffton to ever do so.



ABOVE: Officer Creason is congratulated by Mayor Sulka for receiving the Eric Bamberg School Resource Officer Award; RIGHT: Captain Angel Tubbs graduated from the FBI National Academy Class, 243rd Session.



Town of Bluffton Engineering and Facilities

Engineering

- Transportation: Established and improved working relationships with SCDOT and Beaufort County regarding current and future traffic and road related issues and incentives.
- Completed over \$8 million in capital projects which include, Law Enforcement Center and Buck Island /Simmonsville Sewer, Phase I.
- Completed three parks and trail projects including, Oyster Factory Park, Phase I, New River Trail Head, and Buckwalter Greenway Trail.
- Formed new Stormwater Management Division within the Engineering Department to improve emphasis on stormwater and water quality activities, and implementation of the May River Watershed Action Plan and 319 Pilot Project.
- Expanded regional transportation interface and interaction with State, County and other municipalities.
- Finalized and released the May River Watershed Action Plan.

Law Enforcement Center



Completed April 2011

Category 3 facility, approximately 20,000 sq. ft., under budget and ahead of schedule

Capital Improvement Projects



COMPETED JANUARY 2011-

Oyster Factory Park, Phase 1

New ramp, stormwater improvements, bluff stabilization and road resurfacing



COMPETED JUNE 2011-

Greenway Trail

1.35 miles, natural path located off of Buckwalter Parkway



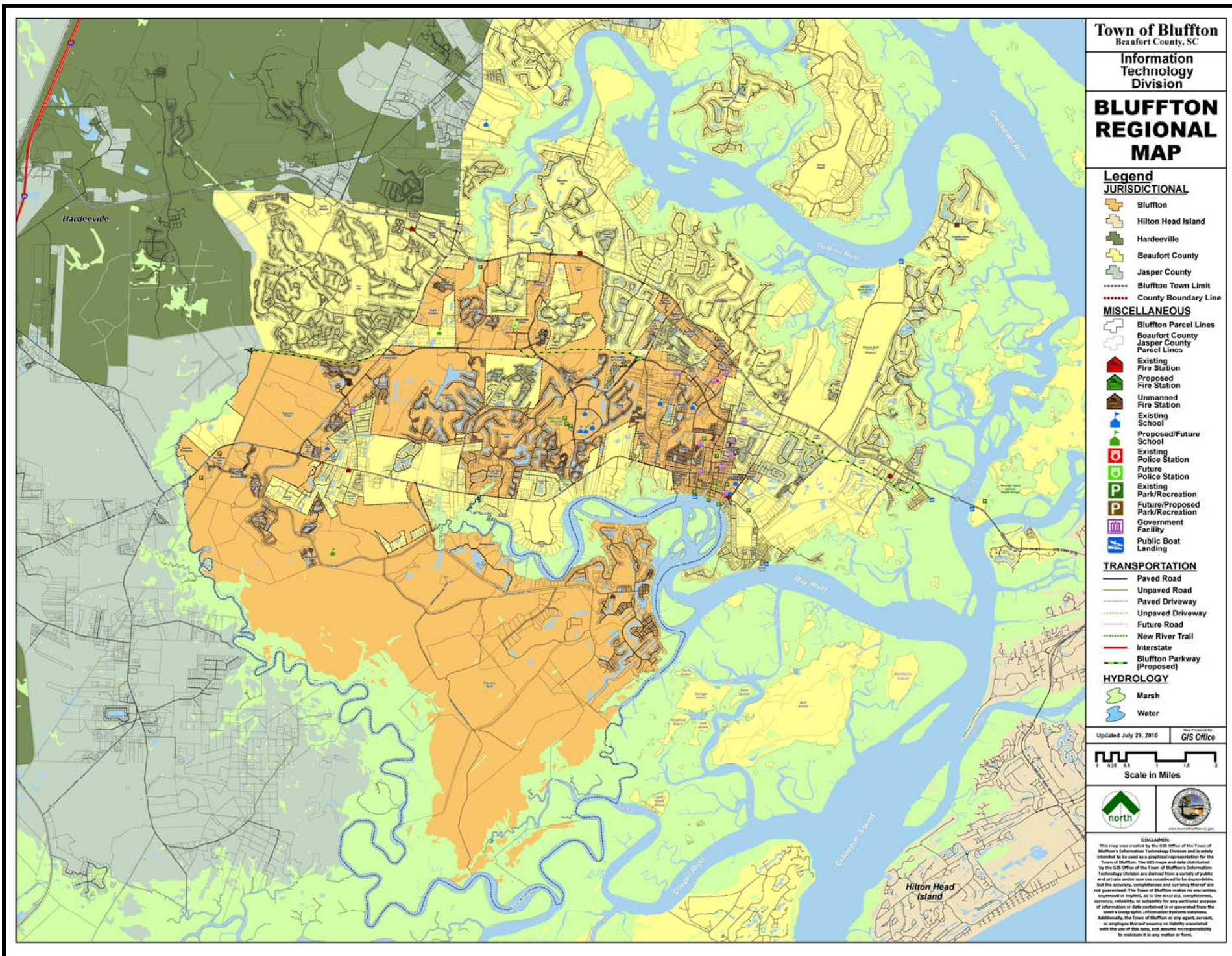
COMPLETED AUGUST 2011 -

Buck Island/Simmons ville Sewer, Phase 1

Main sewer line (6000 ft.), service pipe (8000 ft.), serving over 200 residents

Engineering 2011 Capital Project Activity

Oyster Factory Park Phase 1	Completed	Jan.-11
New River Trail Head Parking	Completed	Jan, 11
Law Enforcement Center	Completed	Apr.-11
Buckwalter Greenway Trail	Completed	Jun.-11
DuBois Park Master Plan Design	Completed	Jul.-11
BIS Sewer Phase 1	Completed	Aug.-11
Buckwalter Place Drainage Improvements	Completed	Sep.-11
Streetscape Phase 2 Construction Package	Completed	Sep.-11
Wayfinding Signage Phase 1	Completed	Sep.-11
Streetscape Phase 1 Grant Work	Construction	Dec.-11
Wharf St. Redevelopment (Affordable Housing)	Construction	Dec.-11
Verdier Cove Drainage Improvements	Construction	Ongoing
BIS Sewer Phase 3 design	Design	Dec.-12
BIS Sewer Phase 2	Construction	Mar.-12
BIS Sidewalks, lighting, etc		
Phase 1	Design	Spring-12
319 Pilot Grant Project	Design	Spring-12
Oyster Factory Park Phase 2	Construction	Spring-12
DuBois Park Phase 1	Construction	Spring-12



Town of Bluffton

Goals 2015

Celebrate the May River

Livable, Sustainable Bluffton Community

Town Government: Excellent Services,
Financially Responsible

Local Economic Expansion and Diversification

Upgraded Town Infrastructure and Facilities



"Bluffton—A State of Mind."

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Visit us at www.townofbluffton.sc.gov

